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Global Knowledge Report

Students for International Knowledge

Message from the President of SIK

Students for International Knowledge (SIK) is a newly founded group at CSUSB that focuses on academic education of international politics and cultures. The influence of the United States in the world, and the world on the United States, is tremendous but unknown to many Cal State students and Americans in general. More troubling is the inadequate level of information available to many students at CSUSB on international issues, which results in a tremendous gap in the campus knowledge base. SIK's mission is to serve as a nucleus to promote academic learning and discussion on our campus through this newsletter and other activities. Everyone is welcome to help us in our journey, the highest collegiate journey, of rectifying wrong through the pursuit of knowledge. – *Andre Castillo, President of Students for International Knowledge*



Andre, Albert, Zaman, Dinna, Shawn, Nick



SIK was founded in 2006 by a group of students from Cal State San Bernardino to educate students, faculty and staff about international news and events not readily available to the CSUSB campus.

SIK Updates for the Month of April

The first two months have been a busy one for our little group. Our email list has expanded from a couple dozen to over seventy. We've made regular contributions to the Coyote Chronicle, attended local conferences, brought Alternate Focus documentaries on the Middle East to San Bernardino public access television, are establishing a Coyote Radio show, have appeared on KFPK radio 90.7 FM, and are working on inviting comedians and intellectual speakers to our campus at CSUSB. SIK elections are on the way as we look to add more and more talent to our organization.

Our goals are ambitious, so our actions must be made to match and coordinate that ambition. With the addition of student, staff, and faculty visionaries we will work to transform this campus into an academic-intellectual hub in the heart of the Inland Empire. Of course, none of this will be possible without the support of you, the CSUSB staff, faculty, and most importantly of all, the students.



Table of Contents:

Muslim Cartoons – 2	Guantánamo Cont. – 4	History Brief – Israel/Palestine. – 7
Guantánamo Prison Camp – 3	Water Problems in Palestine – 5	SIK Information and Events – 6,8

Danish Cartoons and the Muslim World

By Andre Castillo

"The cartoons were a fuse that lit a bigger fire," said Rami Khouri, editor of the Daily Star of Beirut. "It is this deepening sense of vulnerability combines with a sense that the Islamists were on a roll that made it happen."

Relations between Europe and the United States vis-a-vis Arabs and Muslims has in recent history been one of dominance, force, and misunderstanding. Unilateral actions taken by Israel in occupied Palestine and the United States in Iraq, joint efforts by the EU, US, and Israel to curb the Iranian nuclear program, efforts to revoke aid to Palestinians after the election of Hamas and abuses of Muslims by American hands in Guantanamo, Afghanistan, and Abu Ghraib have continued this relationship. In January of this year a newspaper in the United Kingdom broke a revealing story: British consulate officials were withholding visas from young female immigrants to coerce them into sexual favors. The women listed were predominately of Middle Eastern descent and Muslim. In France, hostility towards the subtle and overt racism of the French government and people towards the Arab population culminated in weeks of rioting in October of 2004. It was around this time that a Danish newspaper published cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist. After initial peaceful Muslim objections, publishers in Norway, France, and a number of other European countries joined Denmark in solidarity in defaming Islam.

The reaction of the European editors after the withdrawing of the Saudi ambassador to Denmark is telling. Rather than acknowledge the deep-seated prejudices and hostility to Islam, Muslims, and Middle Easterners that Europe is currently experiencing, the editors and their supporters rather chose to engage in further antagonism. This was confirmed by reports by the New York Times that the "artists" behind the offensive cartoons drew 3 additional shocking cartoons and sent them personally to Muslims who

objected after the initial publishing. These actions, as well as the well-reported antipathy by the European editors and their governments, point to one of two things - either they were unaware of the current European-Islamic power dynamic mentioned, or were aiming for confrontation and expected to come out on top. There is, in all likelihood, merit to both possibilities.

The reaction by Muslims in Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine, Libya, and more was expected by almost no one. The enormity and initial near unanimity of the reaction - as confirmed by the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the initial objections against the cartoons, though its most recent statement on February 21st urged calm - point to new developments in the power relationship between so-called "Western" and Muslim countries. With the additional release of the Turkish movie Kurtlar Vadisi Irak (Valley of the Wolves Iraq), not since the Arab Boycott in 1973 has the widespread disaffection by Arabs or Muslims in regards to their perceived treatment by America, Europe, and Israel been given such publicity. Since that time, American, European, and Israeli involvement has also not decreased. The publication of the offensive cartoons combined with the subsequent European reaction and radical religious support has crystallized for many what Muslims worldwide have long suspected - the "War on Terrorism," Quartet involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, European and American immigration and integration policies, and general "Western" policies and attitudes vis-a-vis the Middle East are not as well intentioned as they claim to be. The ensuing violence and destruction, however, perpetuated by radical



"Danish businesses in the Middle East have been crippled."



religious followers in the month of February (according to CIA and peaceful Muslim reports) have also had the effect of “confirming” many fears in the US and Europe of an impending so-called clash of civilizations, not unlike the death threats heaped on Salmon Rushdie after the publication of his Satanic Verses. Leaders, organizations and people throughout the world have condemned and urged a stop to the violence which has thus far led to the deaths of over 30 people and attacks on Danish and Norwegian embassies in Lebanon, Syria and Iran, the Italian embassy in Libya, and Christian Churches in Nigeria. By seizing on the strength of anti-“Western” sentiments religious radicals have managed to achieve their short-term blood ends at the expense of masking legitimate Muslim concerns.

What is uniquely new in all of this is the awareness by an increasing number of Muslims of their economic power in relation to Europe and America outside of the petroleum industry. In addition to bringing Europe greater access to foreign markets and labor, globalization has also increased its dependency on the Muslim world, in effect balancing a level of power which has heretofore been marked by domination on the part of Europe, America, and Israel. Danish businesses in the Middle East have been crippled and Danish Sweets in Iran are now “Roses of the Prophet Mohammad.” Freedom fries are still sold separately.

The lesson to be learned by Europe is that many Muslim countries and their populations are not willing to do business with those they believe to view them as inferior. The lack of understanding shown to Islam and its adherents is a problem endemic of modern “Western” societies that, in looking for answers to 9/11, the Madrid and the London bombings, is quick to draw conclusions, but slow to look for facts. And as the Muslim peoples are making increasingly clear - this is something that is simply going to have to change. Under the current circumstances, the zeal for this change in the Muslim world will rarely,

unfortunately, stop short of violent means. Let us hope for Europe’s sake, for the Muslims sake, and for the sake of all of us, that this change will finally begin to happen – and peacefully. Anything less than positive change will be but more fodder for anti-“Western” and anti-Islamic sentiments on both sides.

Guantánamo Prison Camp

By Nick Arellano

Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1373 requiring all states to take measures to prevent, prohibit, and criminalize terrorist acts. The United States is also party to Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1373 requiring all states to take measures to prevent, prohibit, and criminalize terrorist acts. The United States is also party to several human rights treaties, including but not limited to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture), and

“The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has asked the United States to close down Guantánamo Bay detention center”



“Guantánamo is a scandal, the founding fathers...must be turning in their graves... America practices illegal detention, ill-treatment and even torture.”

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held at the Guantánamo
prison camp."*

*"For Here, we follow the
truth wherever it may
lead."
– Thomas Jefferson*

the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Consistent with human rights treaties, the U.S. is also party to international law treaties particularly the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions on the Treatment of Prisoners of War and the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War respectively.

In a report issued Tuesday, February 15 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, five independent human rights experts on mandate from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has asked the United States to close down Guantánamo Bay detention center and to bring all detainees to trial or release them without further delay. The following day the European Parliament backed the UN report calling for the closure of the prison camp. "Guantánamo is a scandal, the founding fathers of the United States must be turning in their graves at the constitutional outrage whereby America practices illegal detention, ill-treatment and even torture," said Liberal Democrat Member of the European Parliament Baroness Sarah Ludford.

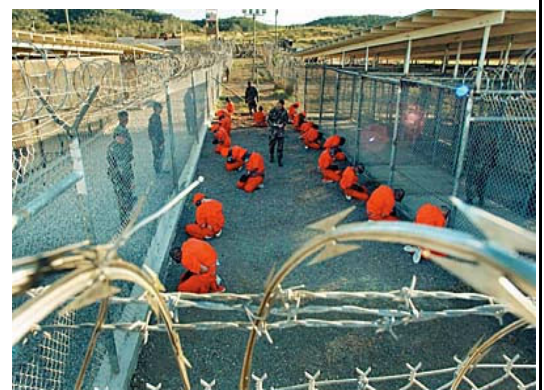
According to information provided by the United States government as of 21 October 2005 there were approximately 520 people being held at the Guantánamo prison camp. Since the establishment of the base in January 2002 there have been 68 prisoners transferred from Guantánamo to other governments including Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Morocco, the United Kingdom, France and Saudi Arabia. The majority of the detainees were captured in Afghanistan post 9/11, but only handfuls have been tried. As of 21 October 2005, President Bush had designated 17 detainees eligible for trial by a military commission. The reports are also based on information available from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Human Rights Watch and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The U.S. immediately dismissed the

findings of the report. White House spokesman, Scott McClellan stated, "I think what we are seeing is a rehash of allegations that have been made by lawyers representing some of the detainees." UN Secretary General Kofi Annan did not fully endorse all findings in the report saying, "There's a lot in the report and I cannot say that I necessarily agree with everything, sooner or later the U.S. will need to close Guantánamo and I hope the government will do it as soon as possible."

In reference to the camp in Guantánamo the U.S. military continues to detain prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison. Iraq's interim Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari has condemned the latest images of prisoner abuse. The Iraqi government condemns the practice of torture for any reason and takes responsibility to prevent such acts. The ICRC said the latest abuse images showed clear violations of international humanitarian law. ICRC spokeswoman said, "We are shocked and dismayed at the mistreatment and abuse displayed in these images." Most prisoners in Guantánamo are said to have links to the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and loyal supporters of Iraq's former leader Saddam Hussein. Reports of torture by sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme temperatures, prolonged isolation, and the use of dogs.

The rules of international humanitarian law apply to situations of armed conflict; therefore, the situation in Guantánamo is illegal under international law.



*Suspected al-Qaeda and
Taliban detainees
(© AFP / Shane T. McCoy)*

Water Problems in Palestine

By Dinna Omar

When observing the Palestinian Israeli conflict water is consistently overlooked as a diminutive everyday issue, particularly in the eyes of the international community. Israel has been in violation of international riparian laws for half a century, while the lack of Palestinian access to water directly influences the daily lives of Palestinians already living under miserable conditions. Water subjugation disturbs ancient villages such as At-Tuwani. Due to the misappropriation of water women are especially affected, having to work twice as hard to cultivate their crops, raise their children and walk miles to find alternative water resources.

The paper "*Water and the Red Line*," written by Dr. Ralph Salmi, provides clarity and context to the situation. According to this study, the state of Israel obtains only 25% of its usable water from its 1967 internationally recognized borders. 75% of usable Israeli water is illegally appropriated from renewable aquifers in the Palestinian Territories and from the Jordan River. A single Israeli uses five-times as much water as one Palestinian annually. According to the World Health Organization Palestinians receive 40% less water than the minimum domestic criteria for healthy living. The average is at least 100 liters daily while Palestinians consume only about 57 liters daily. Less than 20 years ago most Palestinians received water from local wells and aquifers where today almost every Palestinian home (except some homes in the south of the West Bank) receive their water from tankers on rooftops that must last for weeks before the water is renewed. Often times water tankers cannot reach the villages due to closures and checkpoints. Israeli colonizers (settlers) continuously attack Palestinian water tankers and prevent them from distributing water. Local

Israeli colonizers solely own and control the flow of water in the region. Therefore, a superior dichotomy is firmly institutionalized. Israelis have made it clear who is the slave and who is the slave master. They have reaffirmed their direct oppressive power over the lives of Palestinians using the most basic source of life – water.

Regardless of the habitual harassment of Israeli colonizers, insufficient water, killing of crops and sheep and their difficult daily lives, Palestinians refuse to leave their home. An example of this resistance is displayed in the small ancient village of At-Tuwani. According to Operation Dove (an Italian international peace organization) Israeli colonizers have poisoned the At-Tuwani water supply numerous times. Many children have become sick and many sheep have died from drinking or playing around the poisoned water. For twenty years the village of At-Tuwani has endured provocative aggression and violence from Israeli colonizers. Their local water source has been completely damaged, making the water unusable to graze sheep, water crops, as well as unsafe for health and sanitary purposes.



"Although I do not...believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected."

– Thomas Jefferson

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For more information
and a list of upcoming
events visit us at!

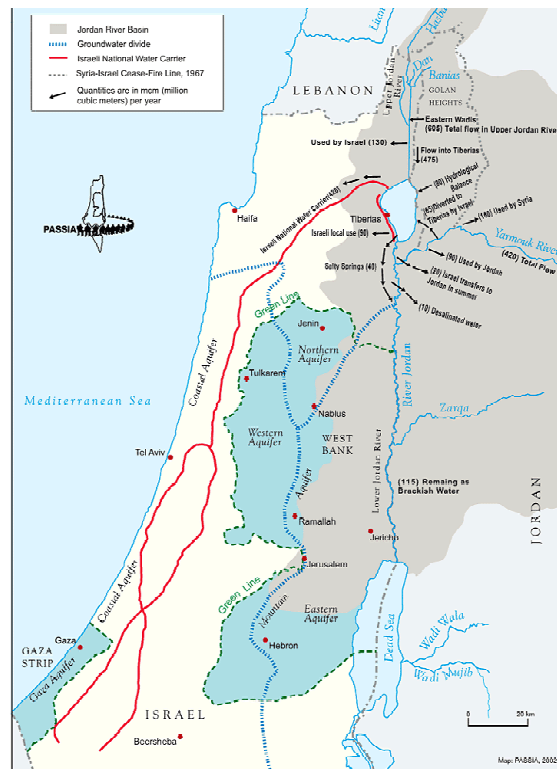
csusbsik.wordpress.com

*"Better be unborn than
untaught, for ignorance is
the root of misfortune."
— Plato*

Water Problems Continued...

At awkward times in the night, Israeli colonizers burn crops in the fields such as lentils and bypass the road from the Ma'on colony to deliberately drive over At-Tuwani farmland, making the lives of women who work the land tremendously difficult. Because the people of At-Tuwani refuse to leave, the women must walk miles to the nearest water-well - sometimes two or three times a day. When buildings are torn down the people of Al-Tuwani resist by building it anew. When their crops are tarnished they resist and plant more seeds to grow more food. When their sheep are poisoned they resist by nursing them to health and traveling further to graze more. And when their water is poisoned they resist – they walk miles to find more water. The most moving sight in At-Tuwani is where women have started a knitting factory, converted from a

small room into now a little museum where they sell embroidered items. The proceeds are used specifically to buy water and to improve the lives of the women and their families. Women have played a vital roll in refusing to depart from the land they have cultivated, loved and worked for thousands of years. For like water, women are the basic source of life. . While they may lack water they refuse to lack will.



Surface Water in Palestine

History Briefing: A Synopsis of the Israel/Palestine Conflict

From IfAmericansKnew.org

For 2,000 years there was no such conflict.

The land of Palestine was inhabited by Palestinian Arabs. In 1850 these consisted of approximately 400,000 Muslims, 75,000 Christians, and 25,000 Jews. For centuries these groups had lived in harmony: 80 percent Muslim, 15 percent Christian, 5 percent Jewish.

Zionism

But then in the late 1800s a group in Europe decided to colonize this land. Known as "Zionists," this group consisted of an extremist minority of the world Jewish population. They wanted to create a Jewish homeland, and at first considered locations in Africa and South America, before finally settling on Palestine for their colony.

At first this immigration created no problems. However, as more and more Zionists immigrated to Palestine — many with the express wish of taking over the land for an exclusively Jewish state — the indigenous population became increasingly alarmed. Eventually, there was fighting between the two groups, with escalating waves of violence.

UN Partition Plan

Finally, in 1947 the United Nations decided to intervene. However, rather than adhering to the democratic principle espoused decades earlier by Woodrow Wilson of "self-determination of peoples," in which the people themselves create their own state and system of government, the UN chose to revert to the medieval strategy whereby an outside power arbitrarily divides up other people's land.

Under considerable pressure from high-placed American Zionists, the UN decided to give away 55 percent of Palestine to a Jewish state — despite the fact that this group represented only about 30 percent of the total population, and owned under 7 percent of the land.

1948 War

When the inevitable war broke out the outcome was never in doubt, according to U.S. intelligence reports from the time. The Zionist army consisted of over 90,000 European-trained soldiers and possessed modern weaponry, including up-to-date fighter and bomber airplanes. The Arab forces, very much a third-world army, consisted of approximately 30,000 ill-equipped, poorly trained men. The U.S. Army, British intelligence, and the CIA all agreed: it would be no contest.

By the end of the 1948 war the Jewish state — having now declared itself "Israel" — had conquered 78 percent of Palestine — far more than that proposed even by the very generous UN partition plan. And three-quarters of a million Palestinians had been made refugees. Over 400 towns and villages had been destroyed, and a new map was being drawn up, in which every city, river and hillock would receive a new, Hebrew name. All vestiges of the Palestinian culture were to be erased. In fact, for many decades Israel — and the US, following its lead — denied the very existence of this population. Golda Meir once said, in fact: "There is no such thing as a Palestinian."



Historic Palestine



UN Partition Plan

"Three-quarters of a million Palestinians had been made refugees. Over 400 towns and villages had been destroyed, and a new map was being drawn up



1967 Occupation

Courtesy of
www.IfAmericansKnew.org

For more information, visit the
SIK Website at
csusbSIK.worldpress.com

1967 War

In 1967, Israel conquered still more land. Following the Six Day War, in which Israeli forces launched a highly successful, Pearl Harbor-like surprise attack on Egypt, Israel occupied the additional 22 percent of Palestine that had eluded it in 1948 — the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It also occupied parts of Egypt (which since were returned) and Syria (which remain under occupation).

Current Conflict

There are, then, two issues at the very core of the continuing conflict and escalating violence in the Middle East:

First, there is the inevitably destabilizing effect of trying to maintain an ethnically preferential state, particularly when the exclusionist entity is of largely colonial origin. As we have seen, the original population of what is now Israel was 95 percent Muslim and Christian. And yet, Muslim and

Christian refugees are not being allowed to return to their homes in the current "Jewish state." Israeli peace negotiators refuse to even discuss the possibility of applying this UN guaranteed right.

Second, Israel's continued confiscation of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza is being resisted by the Palestinian inhabitants. It is these occupied territories that, according to the Oslo peace accords of 1993, were going to become a Palestinian state. However, when Israel continued to take land in these areas and to move its citizens onto it, the Palestinian population rebelled. This uprising, called the "Intifada" (Arabic for "shaking off") began at the end of September 2000 and continues to this day.

[The Intifada officially ended in 2005, however Israeli incursions and the expansion of Separation Wall continue, sowing the seeds for future conflict.]

Upcoming Events Calendar

April 7:

A.N.S.W.E.R. Public Forum: Eyewitness Palestine Israeli Settler & State

Violence: The Case of Tel Rumeida

Friday, April 7, 7:30 pm 1800 Argyle Ave, #410 Los Angeles, CA 90028

April 22

The News Circle/Arab-American Affairs 34th anniversary banquet.

Radisson Midtown Hotel, Los Angeles. For reservations details and to receive an invitation, please call: (818) 507-0333, and/or visit:

www.arab-american-affairs.net

May 1, 4, 8 & 11:

Teaching about the Middle East - A Workshop for Teachers * -

<http://www.afsc-pswro.org/mepep/events.htm#workshop>